



DIVISION OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

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Community Health Services
Disease Prevention
Family Health
Health Promotion
State Epidemiologist

ARBOVIRAL INFECTIONS Fact Sheet

(arthropod-borne encephalitis, eastern equine encephalomyelitis, St. Louis encephalitis, California encephalitis)

Office of Disease Prevention

(605) 773-3737

1-800-592-1861 in South Dakota only

This material is provided for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical care. We are not able to answer personal medical questions. Please see your health care provider concerning appropriate care, treatment or other medical advice.

What are arboviral infections?

Arboviral (short for arthropod-borne) infections are caused by any of a number of viruses transmitted by arthropods such as mosquitoes and ticks. These infections generally occur during warm weather months when mosquitoes are active.

Who gets arboviral infections?

Anyone can get an arboviral infection but young children and the elderly appear to be most susceptible.

How are arboviral infections spread?

Most arboviral infections are spread by infected mosquitoes. Fortunately, only a few types of mosquitoes are capable of transmitting the disease and only a small number of the mosquitoes are actually carrying the virus. Occasionally, migrating birds have the ability to carry viruses from one area of the country to another.

What are the symptoms of arboviral infections?

Symptoms of the various types of viral infections transmitted by mosquitoes are usually similar but differ in severity. Most infections do not result in any symptoms. Mild cases may occur with only a slight fever and/or headache. Severe infections are marked by a rapid onset, headache, high fever, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, paralysis or death.

How soon after exposure do symptoms occur?

Symptoms usually occur five to 15 days after exposure to infective mosquitoes.

Does past infection with an arbovirus make a person immune?

Yes, infection with an arbovirus can provide immunity to that specific virus and perhaps to other related viruses.

What is the treatment for an infection due to an arbovirus?

The physician will usually attempt to relieve the symptoms of the illness, but there is no specific treatment available for arbovirus infections.

How can arboviral infections be prevented?

Insect repellents can be used when outdoors in mosquito-infested areas. Homes can be screened to prevent entry of mosquitoes. Communities or municipalities may establish a mosquito surveillance or control program to reduce mosquito populations by applying pesticides and draining swampy areas.